

IN THE CLAIMS:

The status of each claim that has been introduced in the above-referenced application is identified in the ensuing listing of the claims. This listing of the claims replaces all previously submitted claims listings.

1. (Currently amended) A method for forming a protective layer on a plurality of semiconductor device components, comprising:  
providing a fabrication substrate carrying a plurality of semiconductor device components, adjacent semiconductor device components on the fabrication substrate being separated from one another by a street extending therebetween;  
applying a protective material to active surfaces of at least the adjacent semiconductor device components;  
severing the protective material and at least partially severing the adjacent semiconductor device components from one another along the street; and  
subjecting at least the protective material to conditions in which ~~healing~~ cracks and delaminated areas in the protective material that were formed during the at least partially severing are healed.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein providing comprises providing a fabrication substrate with at least one bond pad exposed at an active surface of each of the adjacent semiconductor device components.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein providing comprises providing a fabrication substrate with a plurality of semiconductor device components comprising at least one of semiconductor devices, interposers, and carrier substrates.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein applying comprises applying the protective material such that the at least one bond pad of each of the plurality of

semiconductor device components is exposed through the protective material sufficiently to effect electrical contact therewith.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein providing comprises providing the fabrication substrate with each of the plurality of semiconductor device components having a conductive structure protruding from the at least one bond pad thereof.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein applying comprises applying the protective material such that the protective material contacts a base portion of at least one conductive structure.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein applying comprises forming a support structure around the base portion of the at least one conductive structure.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 5, wherein applying comprises applying the protective material such that the protective material is spaced apart from a base portion of at least one conductive structure.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein applying comprises applying a preformed sheet of protective material to the active surfaces.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet comprising partially cured protective material.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet comprising thermoplastic material.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein applying preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet including apertures positioned to align with the at least one bond pad of each of the adjacent semiconductor device components.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein applying comprises applying a preformed sheet of protective material to the active surfaces.

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet comprising partially cured protective material.

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet comprising thermoplastic material.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying a preformed sheet including apertures therein positioned to align with the at least one bond pad of each of the adjacent semiconductor device components.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein applying the preformed sheet comprises applying the preformed sheet such that a conductive structure protruding from each of the adjacent semiconductor device components on the fabrication substrate passes through a plane of the preformed sheet.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising heating each conductive structure prior to applying the preformed sheet.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein applying comprises applying the protective material in a liquid state.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19, further comprising spreading the protective material to form a protective layer on the active surfaces.

21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein applying the protective material in the liquid state comprises applying a quantity of a substantially uncured polymer to the active surfaces.

22. (Previously presented) The method of claim 21, further comprising partially curing the polymer prior to severing and at least partially severing.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein ~~healing~~ subjecting is effected while the polymer remains in a partially cured state.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 23, further comprising further curing the polymer ~~following healing~~ after subjecting at least the protective material to conditions in which cracks and delaminated areas in the protective material that were formed during the at least partially severing are healed.

25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 24, further comprising completely severing the adjacent semiconductor device components from one another along the street ~~following healing~~ after subjecting at least the protective material to conditions in which cracks and delaminated areas in the protective material that were formed during the at least partially severing are healed.

26. (Previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein applying the protective material in the liquid state comprises applying liquefied thermoplastic material to the active surfaces.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26, further comprising permitting or causing the thermoplastic material to at least partially harden prior to severing and at least partially severing.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 26, wherein heating ~~subjecting~~ comprises heating at least portions of the thermoplastic material located over peripheral regions of the adjacent semiconductor device components following severing and at least partially severing.

29. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, further comprising completely severing the adjacent semiconductor device components from one another along the street ~~following heating~~ after subjecting at least the protective material to conditions in which cracks and delaminated areas in the protective material that were formed during the at least partially severing are healed.